IPTs Provide Big Payoffs For JTIDS Milestone III DAB

Joint Air Force/Army Program Goes One Step Further — "Better, Faster, Cheaper…and Smoother"

A L L A N   D .   H A R T W E L L • 1 S T   L T .   J O S E P H   E .   N A N C E ,   U . S .   A I R   F O R C E

Recently, the Joint Tactical Information Distribution System (JTIDS) Joint Program Office (JPO) at the Electronic Systems Center (ESC), Hanscom AFB, Mass., used the new Integrated Product Team (IPT) process and latest [1995] Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 5000 to complete Defense Acquisition Board (DAB) Milestone III *more rapidly* and at *less cost* than ever before. A Joint Air Force/Army Program, JTIDS is one of the few programs to receive two Joint Service DAB Milestone III approvals within about two years. Because we, the authors, personally worked on these two comparably complex DABs, our information is first-hand. In this article, we hope to provide *Program Manager* readers something of value in managing their own programs, based on our own unique experiences using the new acquisition procedures.

JTIDS — Getting Started
The JTIDS is a secure radio terminal that provides a joint and allied interoperable tactical digital data link for real-time distribution of air tracking and networking among air, ground, surface, and subsurface platforms. Using Link-16, the DoD-directed standard for tactical communications of all processed data for the warfighter, JTIDS falls into three basic classifications:

• The original Class 2 can be either aircraft-mounted or ground-based.

• Class 2H is a high-power version for aircraft or shipboard use.

• The Class 2M is a ground-based Army variant that supports theater air and missile defense engagement operations.

Shortly after implementation of the new DoDD 5000, ESC participated in two JTIDS DABs. The first was in March 1995 for Combined Class 2/2H Full Rate Production (FRP) and Class 2M Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) under the previous 1991 DoDD 5000 series. The second was in April 1997 for Class 2M FRP under the new 1995 DoDD 5000.[1] The now-mandatory IPT process, along with acquisition reforms such as the Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition (SAF/AQ) "Lighting Bolt" initiatives, proved highly successful for our program, at both the JPO and the Pentagon.

The metrics shown in Figure 1 indicate we achieved DAB approval "better, faster, cheaper…and smoother." Further, we reduced the number of Service-produced DAB documents by 59 percent, while simultaneously cutting JPO-produced documents 80 percent.

Consequently, we reduced the DAB preparation team by 77 percent and associated JPO support by 64 percent. Ultimately, our estimated cost savings for personnel, travel, and other direct costs, compared to our earlier DAB, totaled well over $1.5 million.

Once the Overarching IPT (OIPT) approved the Class 2M terminal for FRP, we became the first command, control, communications, and intelligence (C^3I) Acquisition Category (ACAT) ID program for which OSD waived both the DAB Readiness Meeting (DRM) and the DAB itself! As a result, we produced a better end product, kept the DAB on track, substantially lowered preparation costs, and smoothed the final DAB approval by all parties.

DoD Implements the IPT Process
Since the JPO completed its March 1995 DAB, DoD has implemented major changes in acquisition philosophy. In April 1995, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology issued a memorandum addressing the reengineering of the acquisition oversight and review process. Specifically, he directed that ACAT I program managers begin using IPTs and that oversight and guidance of their respective programs reside at the OIPT level.

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In March 1995, OSD updated the DoDD 5000 series. The Secretary of Defense then issued a memorandum in May 1995, further expanding on the use of IPTs and promoting flexible, tailored approaches to oversight and review.

In November 1995, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition published the *Rules of the Road – A Guide For Leading Successful Integrated Product Teams*, which stated IPTs are to "facilitate decision making by making recommendations based on timely input from the entire team."[2] Accordingly, DoD now calls for OIPTs (upper circle, Figure 2) to focus on strategic guidance, tailoring, program assessment, and resolution of issues elevated by Integrating IPTs. Moreover, OIPTs are tailorable, drawing from a core of "11 plus" organizations, as appropriate to specific program needs.

At the next level down, Integrating IPTs plan program success by identify-

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ing opportunities for acquisition reform, program status, and then identifying and resolving program issues (middle circle, Figure 2). Program teams and system contractors form Program Office IPTs (lower circle, Figure 2) for program execution, and identification and implementation of acquisition reform.[3]

As depicted in Figure 2, IPTs are at the heart and core of the new DoDD 5000 series. Key to our success were the following six factors:

Begin Program Office DAB preparation 18-24 months before the anticipated DAB. The end user requirement for fielded terminals ultimately drove the Class 2M Milestone III DAB schedule. Using our existing JTIDS master schedule, we worked backward and determined that, to meet users' needs, our DAB should be in the March 1997 time frame to allow for a May 1997 contract award. From our experience, we recommend at least 18-24 months for a DAB. Our Program Office prepa-

JTIDS CLASS AND MILESTONE III DECISION			
	2/2H FRP & 2M LRIP	**2M FRP**	**RESULTS**
APPLICABLE DoDD 5000 SERIES	1991	1995	
JOINT SERVICES	Four	Two (Air Force & Army)	
DAB ACTIVITIES			
Time Frame (DAB Kickoff to ADM)	1 Nov 93 - 1 Mar 95	1 Jun 95 - 30 May 97	
Major Milestones Deleted/Waived	1 (DAB)	3 (CAIG, DRM, & DAB)	
Final OIPT Meeting	N/A	17 Apr 97	
DAB Readiness Meeting	24 Feb 95	Waived	
DAB	Paper	Waived	
DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED			
Service-Produced	22	9	59% Reduction
Joint Program Office-Produced	20	4	80% Reduction
TOTAL	42	13	69% Reduction
PERSONNEL ASSIGNED			
DAB Preparation Team	22	5	77% Reduction
Additional JPO Support	44	16	64% Reduction
TOTAL	66	21	68% Reduction
ESTIMATED SAVINGS			
Personnel Savings			25+ Person Years
Travel Expenses			$19,000+
Other Direct Charges			$8,000+
TOTAL			$1.5 Million+ Savings

FIGURE 1. **IPT and Acquisition Reform Cost Savings — Second DAB**

ration began about 21 months before the anticipated March 1997 DAB.

At the outset, JTIDS Program Director (PD), David Carstairs established the DAB as the No. 1 JPO priority. However, this time we used a draft DoDD 5000 — and acquisition reform initiatives unfolding right before our eyes. Before OSD fully approved these new policies, the JPO adopted the draft versions to jump-start our efforts.

First, the PD assigned a DAB-experienced O-5 to oversee all DAB efforts. Next, he created two Program Office IPTs as spelled out in the new guidelines (bottom circle, Figure 2). One was the DAB Preparation IPT, headed by a DAB-seasoned O-2, which was directly responsible for the DAB itself. The other was the 2M IPT, headed by an O-4, which provided technical support for the DAB efforts, ongoing 2M contracts, data, configuration management, repair of existing 2M terminals, and eventual award of the 2M FRP contract. This IPT also worked directly with the Army to support developmental and operational testing, operational missions, field exercises, and host platform integration. Both IPTs consisted

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of a mix of military, government civilian, and support contractors assigned to specific tasks, with additional functional support as necessary.

Each Program Office IPT conducted initial teambuilding sessions that helped bring everyone up-to-speed. Next, each IPT created its own charter of responsibility, accountability, and limits, providing direction without constraining flexibility to respond to changing requirements. Each task and functional support area had a primary point of contact (POC), responsible to the respective IPT Chief. Beyond this, each POC interfaced with external organizations for their respective areas.

We collocated all IPT personnel to optimize communication and coordination. As an experiment, the DAB Preparation IPT tore down its cubicle walls and transformed six cubicles into a common working area. This "open concept" optimized daily activities and facilitated rapid response to incoming task requests. Periodic offsites maintained team spirit and kept us focused. We recommend being innovative with "hands off" management.
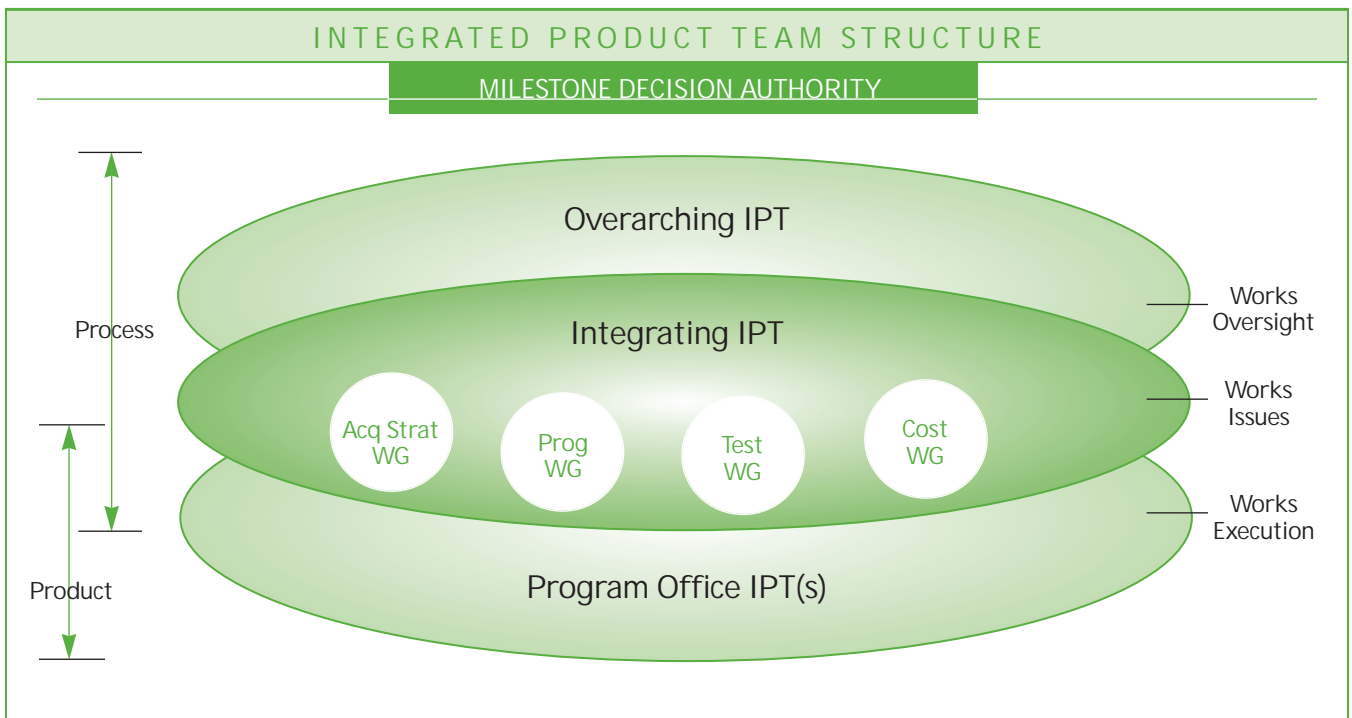

INTEGRATED PRODUCT TEAM STRUCTURE

MILESTONE DECISION AUTHORITY

Overarching IPT

Integrating IPT

Acq Strat WG   Prog WG   Test WG   Cost WG

Program Office IPT(s)

Process

Product

Works Oversight

Works Issues

Works Execution

FIGURE 2. **Organization and Roles of JTIDS 2M IPTs**

As we progressed, at the direction of the DAB Preparation IPT Chief, team members reviewed newly emerging acquisition initiatives, such as the SAF/AQ Lightning Bolts, and scoped out the changes in the draft DoDD 5000 regulatory and statutory requirements. Next, we identified Service and Pentagon functional POCs and started strategic planning efforts. Acting as our eyes and ears at the Pentagon, the Air Force JTIDS Program Element Monitor (PEM) proved invaluable throughout the DAB process. In addition, we also worked closely with the Army counterpart.

After pulling together the core organizations from the Air Force and Army, the JPO IPTs scheduled our first strategic planning session in mid-July 1995. The Army Material Developer was Program Manager-Tactical Radio Communications Systems at Fort Monmouth, N.J. Previously, this office played an integral role in identifying Army-specific terminal requirements during the 2M engineering and development phase. Using production-representative hardware, they also supported the DAB and managed developmental and operational testing.

As part of the agenda for our first session, we reviewed the latest acquisition reform initiatives and decided how to fold them into the ongoing 2M Program. Using commercially available scheduling and program management software to establish an event-driven schedule of key milestones, we identified "critical path" tasks for future detailed tracking. At the conclusion of our second strategic meeting in mid-September 1995, we solidified plans and determined that we needed no further strategic sessions. We were now ready to form the next level of IPT.

Establish an Integrating IPT around 15 months before the DAB. At the second level (middle circle, Figure 2), the new DoDD 5000 calls for the formation of an Integrating IPT with subordinate Working Level IPTs. The IPT process wisely requires that decision makers participate in the approval process earlier than in the past. Establishing this Pentagon-level IPT up front helps ensure early buy-in by all stakeholders. For our program, starting approximately 15 months before the DAB seemed about right.

The DAB Preparation IPT and Army representatives worked with key Pentagon organizations to establish the Integrating IPT. Since Class 2M is a Joint Service program, we implemented a co-chair approach with 0-6s from the Air Force and Army. In early December 1995, we held a formal kickoff at the Pentagon. From the previous DAB, we already knew many key players and organizations, so we quickly identified additional participants to ensure comprehensive representation. Ultimately, the Integrating IPT membership consisted of representatives from all four Services and OSD, and spanned over 30 organizations totaling more than 120 people.

From the previous DAB, we were well aware that mindsets and cultures differ from Service to Service. Since the Class 2M was a Joint program, the Air Force and Army mutually developed a proactive stance on how to work together to minimize roadblocks and delays. We sought to understand the complex relationship among all players and stakeholders by looking at the OSD model, versus the JPO's implementation, to clarify mutual roles and goals. Additionally, we identified potential issues early and persevered to keep them from becoming obstacles.

By regulation, the JTIDS PD assumed responsibility for execution of the program, and the Integrating IPT provided support. Serving as a single POC at the Pentagon, the Integrating IPT coordinated and resolved significant DAB-related issues. Finally, the Integrating IPT became a forum for OSD and Component oversight organizations to monitor program progress and assess readiness for the DAB.

The DAB Preparation IPT became the focal point for facilitating communica-tion among all Integrating IPT members. As such, the focal point relied extensively on electronic mail to reduce multiple telephone calls and faxes. This arrangement worked very well for routine communication, scheduling, meeting notices, minutes, action items, status messages, information requests, documentation queries, and distribution. As the team prepared documents, we kept tight configuration control to ensure consistency. Some multi-authored documents took extra effort to reach agreement.

We sought better ways to keep the Integrating IPT members informed. During the course of the DAB effort, several video teleconferences (VTC) reduced travel time and costs. Unfortunately, VTC effectiveness was somewhat limited because specific systems and support technology at different organizations were not always compatible.

Electronic mail made paperless operations practicable. We even created a website for 2M DAB status via the Internet on the World Wide Web. Expanding the existing JPO master DAB file, we also captured 2M records and electronic archives.

Use Working Groups to solidify acquisition framework/documentation. The Integrating IPT focused on program status, plans, identification and resolution of program issues, integration of various subordinate efforts, and application of opportunities for acquisition reform (i.e., innovation and streamlining). We established four primary Working Groups (WG) to support the Integrating IPT (Figure 2):

- Acquisition Strategy
- Programmatics
- Test Coordination
- Cost

We also formed a fifth WG – to obtain early consensus on DAB-deliverable documentation. Once the WG reached agreement on the Service-produced DAB documents, they disbanded, with

any open issues directed to the Programmatics WG. Figure 3 shows the focus of each WG. Co-chaired by the Air Force and Army, our WGs concentrated on DAB and related acquisition issues, then worked to resolve them at the Action Officer (AO) level. If the AO could not resolve the issues, we elevated them to the Integrating IPT.

We soon realized that many AOs at the Pentagon, assigned to support our efforts, were on other IPTs and were stretched to their limits. Often, multiple groups met at the same time, resulting in sporadic AO participation. Using electronic mail, we targeted both the organizations and individuals needed to support a given meeting. This helped participants identify meeting conflicts and set their priorities. Despite electronic meeting notices, we found it effective to call key individuals and verify they would attend .

The DAB Preparation IPT had to be proactive. Their charter was to get the right information to the right people at the right time. As more people became involved with the DAB process, this

> **"The DAB Preparation IPT had to be proactive. Their charter was to get the right information to the right people at the right time. As more people became involved with the DAB process, this role grew more demanding and crucial."**

role grew more demanding and crucial. Besides constantly identifying and tracking all major issues, we also worked with the PEM to keep AOs involved and up-to-date on program events. At times, AOs did not comment on documents or attend meetings. In other cases, lack of comments or participation was a vote of confidence for the DAB efforts, because the AOs had no issues or concerns to raise. Frequent Pentagon interaction was essential, and many organizations did an excellent job keeping our key players in the loop.

In addition to its regular responsibilities, the Program Office prepared a number of the deliverable documents. The 1991 DoDD 5000 called for an extensive list of DAB-deliverable documentation with a specific format, content, and approval process for each document. In contrast, the 1995 DoDD 5000 requires generalized information, and permits the Program Office to tailor the documentation submitted at each DAB milestone. The process of determining which documents to deliver start-

GROUP CO-CHAIRED BY	FOCUS
ACQUISITION STRATEGY WORKING GROUP O-5 and O-4	· Identified all of the risks associated with FRP of the Class 2M terminal · Developed an acquisition strategy which addressed and managed these risks
PROGRAMMATICS WORKING GROUP O-5 and O-4	· Defined and monitored the critical path to the DAB · Investigated ways for the IPT process to improve and streamline the DAB review process
TEST COORDINATION WORKING GROUP O-5 and O-4	· Explored methods of streamlining the flow of test result information from the testing community to the agencies preparing reports for OSD review in support of the Class 2M FRP decision
COST WORKING GROUP GS-13 and GS-12	· Facilitated cost performance trades and assisted in establishing program cost range goals · Adopted streamlining measures to minimize the cost documentation required for oversight and the DAB process
DOCUMENTATION WORKING GROUP O-5 and O-4	· Facilitated DoD approval of documentation to be prepared in support of the DAB decision · Service-Produced · Joint Program Office-Produced

FIGURE 3. **Breakout of JTIDS Product Support IPT By Working Group**

ed with the list of 44 documents prepared for the 1995 Combined DAB. As lead Service, the Air Force required some of the 44 documents for internal use; however, these were not formal DAB deliverables. Others, however, were either regulatory or statutory.

As one of the Air Force's Lightning Bolt initiatives, SAF/AQ created a new acquisition document, the "Single Acquisition Management Plan (SAMP)." This concise, integrated document replaces several existing acquisition documents. Summarizing the overall program, the SAMP identifies any relevant issues along with appropriate acquisition and management solutions. A living document, the plan is first submitted at Milestone I, and then updated at each subsequent milestone.

In the spirit of acquisition reform, we only delivered documents required by statute or regulation, and we used the SAMP to replace all others. Accordingly, our SAMP included many pages of required statutory information, but eliminated a number of otherwise separate submittals, each with its own set format. In addition, some of the other 44 previously submitted documents were still valid, while others needed updating. For example, the Risk Management Plan is a living document that must be up-to-date. Although this document was not a specific deliverable, it played an important role in the JPO's DAB preparation efforts.

Through the Integrating IPT, OSD concurred on four regulatory (R) or statutory (S) documents to be prepared by the JPO:

- Joint Test and Evaluation Master Plan (Joint TEMP) (S) (with Army Annex)

- Acquisition Program Baseline (S)

- Cost Analysis Requirements Description (R)

- SAMP (R)

A list of the five Service-produced DAB-deliverable documents follows:

- Developmental/ Operational Test and Evaluation Report (S), prepared by Operational Test and Evaluation Command;

- Multi-Service Operational Test III Report (S), prepared by Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Command;

- Operational Requirements Document (R), prepared by the Army Training and Doctrine Command;

- Service Cost Position (R), prepared by the Army Cost Economic Analysis Center; and

- Manpower Estimate Report, prepared by the Army (S).

We used the Integrating IPT and acquisition reform to our benefit to work smarter and move through wickets faster. Early release and review of documents also proved helpful in presenting a consistent story. Using electronic mail, we distributed, commented on, and largely coordinated the Joint TEMP and SAMP among Integrating IPT members. This allowed more people to participate on "red teams" with shorter turnaround for updates and comments. Further, we required no separate Independent Cost Estimate to support the 2M cost analysis.

With the Air Force as lead Service, we consolidated the Army requirement for a separate Integrated Program Summary (IPS) into the SAMP, which met everyone's requirements. Upon approval of our acquisition strategy, we then rolled it into the SAMP.

As a result of our experiences in the area of automation, we recommend using standard word processing software compatible with the majority of Integrating IPT members. To minimize transmission and storage problems, we recommend that you keep your documents small (or break them

into smaller chunks). We avoided complex graphics (they can be real memory-hogs). Always maintain tight configuration control of documents. Limit document sign-off to key individuals, but let interested stakeholders coordinate via the IPT process.

Establish an OIPT about 12 months before the DAB. At the third or uppermost level, the new DoDD 5000 calls for the formation of an OIPT (upper circle, Figure 2). As the DAB approaches, the PD asks that an OIPT be established. The OIPT for JTIDS, chaired by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence Acquisition, included top-level managers at the Service and DoD levels. Providing the necessary oversight to our ACAT ID program, the JTIDS OIPT members focused on strategic guidance, program assessment, and issue resolution.

In mid-March 1996, we held an initial kickoff 12 months before the DAB. Although this meeting seemed premature at the time, it motivated cognizant organizations to work toward DAB approval.

Aggressively manage the DAB Process. Organizing our schedule around a few firm due-dates, we worked aggressively to meet them. In addition, we held periodic WG and Integrating IPT meetings when appropriate.

Establishing and maintaining a solid, in-place DAB Preparation IPT helped us react quickly whenever unplanned events surfaced. We used the IPTs to resolve issues and optimize communication among all participants. When naming IPT members, keep in mind that participants must be familiar with your program and demonstrate a willingness to work within the IPT framework. You want the right people to attend, empowered to speak for their organization. We carefully monitored progress of pacing critical path items (test, cost, logistics, major documents, etc.) and developed workarounds as

necessary. To save time, we instituted coordination and sign-off procedures in parallel wherever possible.

Although the SAMP requirement was new, it was a dynamic, tailorable management plan, and it quickly became a cornerstone document. Using the old IPS from the 1995 DAB, we gradually pulled our SAMP together over many months. In time, this document also fleshed out detailed issues such as risk, acquisition strategy, testing, costs, and sustainment. We recommend keeping Integrating IPT participants advised of SAMP progress by periodic draft releases as the DAB approaches.

During the previous DAB, we required additional support to meet several critical deadlines, so we temporarily assigned five key JPO employees at the Pentagon to get through the crunch. For our second DAB, the IPT process made this unnecessary, so we realized considerable cost savings in personnel and travel (Figure 1).

Keep Pentagon functionals fully involved throughout the entire process. We worked hand-in-hand with our PEM, Pentagon AOs, Joint Staff, and other Service decision makers to limit last-minute surprises. Ultimately, by getting the right people together to resolve issues and reach agreement, we found the OIPT was a superb forum for resolving key issues and facilitating DoD approvals. On two occasions, the OIPT resolved major obstacles that could have killed the 2M program. *You must always be proactive, talk constantly, and feel the pulse of advocacy.*

The PD can use the system advantageously by getting solid support from the OIPT and stakeholders. Because of our proactive stance, we progressed remarkably well. In time, OSD deleted or waived three of our major milestone events:

- Cost Analysis Improvement Group

- DAB Readiness Meeting

- DAB

Lessons Learned

The JTIDS Program is one of the few programs to successfully complete two Joint Service DABs within about two years. Through our personal experiences encountering and overcoming many hurdles during the DAB process, the DAB Preparation IPT invariably found that the IPT process was indeed flexible enough to help us resolve key issues. The measurable results?

- We received the first FRP approval for a C^{3}I ACAT ID program at the OIPT level with waived DRM and DAB.

- We reduced the number of Service-produced DAB documents by 59 percent (22 for LRIP versus nine for FRP).

- We cut JPO-produced documents 80 percent (from 20 to four), largely by using the SAMP to consolidate information normally covered by numerous other documents.

- Finally, we cut the DAB preparation team from 22 to five for a 77-percent reduction, and associated JPO support from 44 to 16 for a 64-percent reduction.

- In all, estimated cost savings for personnel, travel, and other direct costs were well over $1.5 million.

From our experience it takes about two years to complete a major DAB milestone. If your program is smaller, or your team has recent DAB experience, you could probably save several months.

Be innovative with "hands off" management. Take a proactive stance, empower small groups, and plow new ground. Strive for cohesion and unity. We tailored many items not essential for final DAB approval. Participants at meetings must be familiar with your program, and demonstrate a willingness to work within the IPT framework. You want the right people to attend, empowered to speak for their organization.

Program Office IPTs should be collocated to optimize communication and coordination. Consider tearing down cubicle walls to create team spirit. Also, establish a focal point for your communication efforts. Maximize electronic mail to streamline communication among all DAB players. As you prepare documents, always maintain tight configuration control to ensure consistency.

Work with your PEM and AOs to resolve concerns before they become issues that lengthen the coordination cycle. The use of proactive IPTs and open dialogue allows issues to be surfaced and resolved early in the DAB process. Details should be hammered out at the WG level. If your process works, you may be able to delete some milestones along the way — perhaps even obtain a waiver of your formal DAB.

Ultimately, insight into the use of IPTs, coupled with acquisition reform, not only enhanced the end product, but kept the DAB on track, substantially lowered preparation costs, and smoothed the final DAB approval by all parties. Our experiences and insight gleaned from working with the IPT process as an important tenet of acquisition reform enabled us to award the final JTIDS production contract on schedule, and to ensure our warfighters will get their needed Class 2M terminals on time. IPTs are a powerful testament to the success of the JTIDS program and DoD's acquisition process *because they work.*

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WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL DAB?

1. **Begin Program Office DAB preparation 18-24 months before anticipated DAB.**
   - Carefully select leaders and core team members.
   - Identify Service and Pentagon functional points of contact.
   - Prepare event-driven schedule and identify critical path tasks.
   - Use strategic planning meetings to establish DAB foundation.

2. **Establish Integrating IPT around 15 months before DAB.**
   - Bring together key players and ensure comprehensive representation.
   - Get decision makers involved earlier and simpler than in the past.
   - Goal is early buy-in by all stakeholders.
   - Establish communication ground rules; optimize use of electronic mail.

3. **Use Working Groups to solidify acquisition framework/documentation.**
   - Form working groups to focus on issues and work the details.
   - Obtain early consensus on DAB-deliverable documentation.
   - Specify organizations and individuals expected to support a given meeting.
   - Early release and review of documents helps present a consistent story.

4. **Establish OIPT about 12 months before DAB.**
   - Ensure that OIPT focuses on strategic guidance, program assessment, and issue resolution.
   - Hold forum to get cognizant organizations working toward DAB approval.

5. **Aggressively manage the DAB Process.**
   - Use IPTs to resolve issues as they arise and optimize communication.
   - Get the right people to attend meetings, empowered to speak for their organization.
   - Make the SAMP a cornerstone document; carefully monitor critical path tasks.
   - Use parallel coordination and sign-off procedures to save time; be creative.

6. **Keep Pentagon functionals fully involved throughout the entire process.**
   - Work hand-in-hand with PEM, AOs, Joint Staff, and other Service decision makers.
   - Use OIPT for resolving key issues and getting DoD approvals.
   - Be proactive and feel the pulse of advocacy; minimize last-minute surprises.